

STATE OF DELAWARE

STATE SENIOR EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

COORDINATION PLAN

April 1, 2004 (proposed)

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INTRODUCTION

The State of Delaware receives funding for the Title V Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) through the Older Americans Act. Delaware Health and Social Services/Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities is the administrator of the Program. The Senior Community Service Employment Program creates subsidized employment opportunities and provides job skills training for Delaware's older workers. With eventual unsubsidized employment as a goal, the Program provides subsidized employment at Host training sites; and, guidance and training through subgrantee (contractor) workshops and counseling. The Program contributes valuable community service while supporting older workers who are in greatest economic and social need; and, SCSEP fosters their independence. In accordance with the Older Americans Act, Amendments of 2000, Section 503, and Older Worker Bulletin 01-04, dated February 20, 2004, Delaware has prepared this State Senior Employment Services Coordination Plan for the Title V Senior Community Service Employment Program.

Delaware Health and Social Services/Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities is the State Unit on Aging and the only Area Agency on Aging in Delaware. There are no National Sponsors. The Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities is one of the mandated Workforce Investment Act partners in the State's One-Stop Career Center system. The Department of Labor's One-Stop Career Centers are located in all three Delaware counties. All One-Stop Career Centers and Title V subgrantees (contractors) share resources. The Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities works closely with the Department of Labor in providing services for Delaware's older population.

SECTION 1

PLAN PARTICIPATION

In order to obtain as full statewide participation as possible in the short time-frame available, the Division sought input from a number of sources in order to develop this Plan. Methods of approach were:

Newspaper Ads

- Public Notices were placed in both the News Journal newspaper (statewide) and the Delaware State News newspaper (Kent and Sussex counties).

Web Site

- A copy of the proposed draft 2004 Senior Employment Services Coordination Plan was posted on the Division's Web site at www.dsaapd.com for review and comment.

Letters

- Coordination letters were sent to agencies throughout the state that provide services to seniors and to the community in general. These agencies included Title III providers of services such as respite, personal care, housekeeping, Hispanic Outreach, legal, transportation, and nutrition services. We also notified senior centers, medical and health facilities, and business and labor organizations regarding the opportunity to review and comment on the Plan.

Planning and Coordination Meetings

- A meeting was held on March 16, 2004 to discuss and formalize coordination on the 2004 State Senior Employment Services Coordination Plan. Attendees included representatives from the Workforce Investment Board; the Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities (the State grantee); and, the three Title V subgrantees operating the program in Delaware.
- Also, in-person discussions of the proposed Plan were conducted by the subgrantees with supervisors at their county's larger host training sites; and, with the managers at Delaware's One-Stop Career Service Centers.

SECTION 2

INVOLVEMENT OF ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS

The 2004 State Senior Employment Services Coordination Plan was prepared with maximum opportunity for coordination through the efforts noted in Section 1.

- a. The Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities (DSAAPD) is Delaware's State Unit/Office on Aging and the only Area Agency on Aging. As such, the Division took the lead in developing the Plan with the parties described in Section 1.
- b. As the Plan was developed, inputs were gathered -- and a planning meeting was held -- with the three subgrantees to obtain feedback based on their unique, front-line experience and knowledge. The subgrantees provided insight into the everyday barriers that participants face regarding the need for proper skills training and eventual unsubsidized employment placement. Areas of the State Plan in which the subgrantees were particularly helpful included social, non-economic barriers to skills training; and, employment and community service needs.

- c. Delaware has one Workforce Investment Board (WIB). The Deputy Director of the Board participated in the planning meeting and in the review and development of the Plan. Her participation provided valuable insight from the perspective of the WIB.
- d. Other organizations were invited to comment on the Senior Employment Services Coordination Plan through newspaper ads, letters, scheduled one-to-one meetings, and Internet access via the Grantee's website. For example, Title III service providers, senior centers, other non-profit organizations, and businesses were notified via letters. Some of the community service organizations were identified by referencing Delaware's *Guide to Services for Older Delawareans*, a comprehensive guide developed by the Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities. The State's One-Stop Career Centers and larger Host Training Agencies provided feedback and coordination through one-on-one meetings with the appropriate subgrantees. In addition, the Grantee's website address was identified in the letters and newspaper ads -- for Internet access to the Plan, statewide.

SECTION 3

COMMENTS

Summary of Comments:

NOTE: a summary of the comments will be included here in Section 3; and, actual written comments will included as Appendix 1 of the Plan.

SECTION 4

STATE PLAN PROVISIONS

a. Basic Distribution of SCSEP Positions

Delaware Health and Social Services/Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities is the only Grantee receiving Title V funds in Delaware. These funds are allocated to three subgrantees who are selected through a Request for Proposal process. The three subgrantees serve the whole state, one subgrantee in each of the State's three (3) counties. The funds are distributed, and the program is managed, through Delaware Health and Social Services/Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities (DSAAPD). The Division operates as Delaware's sole State Unit/Office on Aging and Area Agency on Aging.

The distribution of the Title V, SCSEP funds is based on the State's Equitable Distribution Report (EDR) of eligible individuals within each of the State's three counties. Delaware's EDR information is obtained from the United States Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Division of Older Worker Programs, using statistics from the National Census Bureau. One of Delaware's three counties is New Castle County, which is the largest county in the State, and includes Delaware's largest city (Wilmington). New Castle is also our only urban county. Kent County is the smallest county in the state based on population and land area, while Sussex County is Delaware's most rural county.

In 2003, newly released census data warranted a change to the distribution of participant training authorizations. The Division made the necessary adjustments to the subgrantee PY 2003 contracts to reflect the change in equitable distribution.

Any changes due to slot reallocations were managed through attrition. As in the past, this reallocation was a smooth and cooperative process with no adverse impact to current trainees.

b. Rural and Urban Populations

DSAAPD is the sole Grantee operating the Title V, Senior Community Service Employment Program in Delaware. The Program is administered in all three (3) of the State's Counties through contractual agreements with subgrantees. One (1) subgrantee operates the program in each County.

- Wilmington Senior Center: New Castle County, including the City of Wilmington. (U)*
- Modern Maturity Center: Kent County. (R)*
- First State Community Action Agency: Sussex County. (R)*

* U = Urban. R = Rural

The Division uses the current Federal Equitable Distribution Ratio in administering the Title V, Senior Community Service Employment Program.

The Equitable Distribution Ratio for each county follows:

<i>New Castle County:</i>	<i>50.81%</i>
<i>Kent County:</i>	<i>17.54%</i>
<i>Sussex County:</i>	<i>31.66%</i>
<i>Total:</i>	<i>100%</i>

Eligibility for SCSEP services include age (e.g. people 55 and older); and, family income (e.g. countable family income no greater than 125% of the poverty level).

c. Special Populations

1. Greatest Economic Need

The following 2000 census statistics reflect the total number of Delawareans who are 65 and older and have family incomes at or below 100% of the family poverty level:

<i>New Castle County:</i>	<i>4,294</i>	<i>54% of total</i>
<i>Kent County:</i>	<i>1,305</i>	<i>16% of total</i>
<i>Sussex County:</i>	<i>2,434</i>	<i>30% of total</i>
<i>Total:</i>	<i>8,033</i>	<i>100% of total</i>

Note: the average State SCSEP participant is 68 years old. Of the 14,690 individuals * throughout Delaware who are 65 and older and financially eligible for SCSEP, there are 8,033 -- or 55% -- who are at or below 100% of the family poverty level (similar poverty level statistics for the 55 to 65 age group will be researched during 2004).

* Statistics provided by U.S. DOL ETA in March 2004 show there are 14,690 Delawareans ages 65 and older who are eligible for SCSEP. In addition, the report shows that the total number of Delawareans eligible for SCSEP is 21,385 (note: 265 training slots were allocated in PY03; or 1.2% of the total eligible population).

Overall quarterly statistics through December 31, 2003 show that 67% of participants are at or below 100% of the poverty level. This exceeds the overall 55% rate for those 65 and older by 12%. Again, the comparison is valid given that the average age of Delaware SCSEP participants is 68.

2. Minorities

The following statistics reflect the total SCSEP-eligible population (per age and income requirements) in each county that is of minority status. Minority statistics are based on information provided by U.S. DOL ETA in Mar 04.

New Castle County:	
<i>Black or African American:</i>	3,325
<i>Asian:</i>	139
<i>American Indian/Alaskan Native:</i>	10
<i>Hispanic or Latino:</i>	325
<i>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific:</i>	0
<i>Some other Race Alone:</i>	114
<i>Total:</i>	3,913 *

* Approximately 18% of the 21,385 Delawareans eligible for the Title V Program are minorities in New Castle County.

Kent County:	
<i>Black or African American:</i>	850
<i>Asian:</i>	45
<i>American Indian/Alaskan Native:</i>	45
<i>Hispanic or Latino:</i>	44
<i>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific:</i>	0
<i>Some other Race Alone:</i>	14
<i>Total:</i>	998*

* Approximately 5% of the 21,385 Delawareans eligible for the Title V Program are minorities in Kent County.

Sussex County:	
<i>Black or African American:</i>	1,355
<i>Asian:</i>	0
<i>American Indian/Alaskan Native:</i>	75
<i>Hispanic or Latino:</i>	79
<i>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific:</i>	0
<i>Some other Race Alone:</i>	49
<i>Total:</i>	1,558*

* Approximately 7% of the 21,385 Delawareans eligible for the Title V Program are minorities in Sussex County.

Of the 21,385 Delawareans eligible for the Title V SCSEP Program, 6,469 individuals -- or approximately 30% -- are minorities. Delaware has historically served, and continues to serve, the above-referenced minority groups through the Title V Senior Community Service Employment Program.

Based on Delaware's PY03 second quarter statistics, 148 of the 240 participants enrolled in SCSEP on December 31, 2003 were of minority status. In effect, SCSEP is serving over twice as many clients of minority status than anticipated (62% in SCSEP vs. 30% of eligible population).

3. Greatest Social Need:

Delaware's PY03 second quarter statistics identify a total of 85 disabled participants enrolled in SCSEP on December 31, 2003. Participants in this category totaled approximately 35% of the 240 people enrolled in the program on that date.

County	# Disabled as of 12-31-03
New Castle County:	36
Kent County:	18
Sussex County:	31
Total:	85

In addition, statistics provided by U.S. DOL ETA in March 2004 show there are 12,585 Delawareans disabled and 21,385 people eligible for SCSEP. This 59% ratio is higher than the 35% rate currently seen in the Program. However, many people in the disabled population may be unable to participate in SCSEP training due to their levels of disability.

Social needs encountered by participants in Delaware include physical and mental disabilities, such as: amputation of limbs, arthritis, spinal cord injuries, schizophrenia, mental slowness and emotional problems, as well as previous heart attacks, strokes, and other surgeries. Other non-economic social factors experienced by program participants include language barriers, cultural barriers, and transportation barriers.

Program actions to support Delawareans with these social needs include finding host-training sites that can accommodate these participants. Also, host training sites are informed of any physical and mental limitations of the assigned participant prior to his or her training start date. This would include discussions on the community service needs at a particular training site; and, the determination of the participant's ability to meet those requirements (e.g. standing for long periods of time, bending, light lifting, reading and writing). Also, the amount of stress would be discussed, particularly for those participants who have suffered a heart attack, stroke, or who are in a delicate mental/emotional condition.

Several program activities are pursued to address language and cultural barriers. Such actions include locating bi-lingual interviewers to work with both new and previously enrolled trainees. Another effort is to make arrangements with adult literacy programs that offer basic reading and writing classroom instruction. In addition, the subgrantees print flyers and brochures that explain the Senior Community Service Employment Program in Spanish. The subgrantees also seek host-training sites and employers where a more diverse ethnic population exists.

There are also cultural outreach programs in Delaware, such as the "Hispanic Outreach Program" operated through the Latin American Community Center (LACC). Through partnering with these types of organizations, an increased number of eligible seniors who face various cultural barriers are offered services through the Senior Community Service Employment Program.

Transportation is another non-economic barrier in Delaware. Public bus services operate primarily in New Castle County and the City of Wilmington, with additional limited service available in Kent County. There is very limited transportation services available in Sussex County, which is the most rural county in Delaware. However, the sub-grantee operating the program in Sussex County has been successful in providing SCSEP opportunities throughout the area. The subgrantee has established relationships with host training sites that are in close proximity to the homes of participants. Carpooling is also used when several trainees are placed at host sites or unsubsidized employment locations within close proximity.

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) has two primary goals. The Program provides service to the community through its wage-subsidized participants who are assigned to non-profit organizations. At the same time, SCSEP promotes economic self-sufficiency by offering training and the eventual placement of participants into permanent, unsubsidized jobs that offer greater income and better benefits.

However, one additional social need that requires attention is the element of fear many participants encounter when faced with the prospect of leaving their wage-subsidized host training site for unsubsidized employment. Besides the fear of facing the unknown, there is a level of concern that the job may not be long-term.

One approach to overcoming this concern is by offering related workshop presentations for SCSEP participants. These workshops explain that, should an unsubsidized placement end, the participant may be re-enrolled into SCSEP using current priority and eligibility criteria. All participants are made aware of the terms of the program through initial orientation. However, periodic workshop presentations and discussions can also be effective in calming anxieties.

Another approach to addressing transition fears is to host special "Job Clubs." These meetings bring together former participants -- who have been successfully placed into unsubsidized jobs -- and current trainees. By discussing their experiences in unsubsidized employment, our "success stories" can offer guidance to help minimize uncertainty and low self-esteem.

Another proven approach is to invite former, successful participants to speak at our annual SCSEP Older Workers Celebration. A significant number of current trainees attend the Celebration, and they may learn from and be encouraged by the "success stories."

d. Type of Skills

Participant skill-sets are gathered, recorded, and continually reviewed through each participant's Individual Employment Plan (IEP). Once a participant's IEP is completed, the person is placed in employment training at a host-training site where he or she will learn new skills based on the IEP. Also, the participant will enhance current skills obtained through past work experience and/or education. Participant IEPs are reviewed and updated on a recurring basis during the program year. Plans of Action are formulated with specific training and workshop goals listed, along with their expected completion dates. The management focus is on moving the participant to unsubsidized employment, using the participant-tailored IEP goals and objectives to prepare the trainee for a job. If new or more advanced training is needed, the participant is rotated to another host site where that training is available. The Division monitors this information regularly through on-site visits and desk reviews.

The tracking mechanisms described above address the methods currently in use to gather skill-related information on active participants. The Delaware Department of Labor does not collect skill-set information for program-eligible persons who are not active in the workforce. However, Delaware DOL does continue to gather, and make available to SCSEP, skill-set statistics collected from older Delawareans through self-assessment surveys completed at the One-Stop Career Service Centers (see paragraph 4.e. below).

e. Community Service Needs

The collection, monitoring, and analysis of community service needs is an ongoing process. Currently, SCSEP's service to the community is based primarily on the social and economic needs of the participants entering the program; the demand for service within the community, as determined by outreach efforts; and, through meetings with current and potential non-profit host sites. Also, the acceptance of a host-training site is based on the agency's ability and willingness to ensure a safe work environment; and, to provide the supervision and training necessary to develop the job skills of its assigned SCSEP participants.

Identification of new training site candidates is accomplished through community outreach efforts to determine where the greatest need for services exist. The program's focus is on the social and economic needs, and job skill requirements, of new participants; the needs of current trainees who require assignment changes; and, on the demands for services within the community. The SCSEP subgrantees initiate and maintain contact with area non-profit agencies providing diverse services, such as day care, food services, recreational facilities, health care, and social services. Public service announcements geared towards attracting potential host training sites for SCSEP are also used. Primary efforts in this area also include subgrantee coordination with the Department of Labor One-Stop Career Service Centers.

Additional methods for monitoring and collecting information on outreach, public awareness, and community service needs will be developed with the subgrantees. Special consideration will be given to organizations providing services to seniors. For example, Delaware's SCSEP subgrantee for New Castle County has initiated a survey project that targets all clients participating in activities at the Wilmington Senior Center. The information collected will help SCSEP measure program effectiveness; identify ways to better serve current and future participants; and, to meet community service needs.

f. Coordination with the Workforce Investment Act

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed on March 16, 2000, between the Governor, the Workforce Investment Board, and Delaware Health and Social Services/Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities. The MOU outlines the participation and the contributions of all parties to the One-Stop Delivery System.

Delaware's One-Stop Career Centers are providing eligibility determination, in addition to employment and training services. In fact, all SCSEP participants are dual-enrolled in the One-Stop Delivery System.

The SCSEP Program provides participants that are trained and used as Older Worker Specialists in the One-Stop Career Centers. SCSEP participants are currently assigned and are making significant contributions to the One-Stops in each county -- while also gaining valuable job skills. They have been cross-trained to

assist all citizens who enter the One-Stop Career Centers, with particular focus on the special needs of the elderly population. In addition, all One-Stop Career Centers and Title V subgrantees in Delaware are linked electronically to ensure referrals and services are provided effectively.

Delaware's Department of Labor has provided in-house training to all staff participating in the One-Stop system to integrate and cross-train on all partner services. This training has been provided off-site through local community colleges. Training has focused on inter-linked computer systems and on customer service to ensure access of all available services can be provided to all customers.

Delaware Health and Social Services -- Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities -- administers the Senior Community Service Employment Program. Regular contact with the subgrantees, and on-site monitoring by the Division, ensures that program operations are functioning appropriately. Special attention is given to the working relationships between the subgrantees and the One-Stop Career Centers. A key state SCSEP goal is to maintain and expand a cooperative relationship with the Department of Labor's One-Stop Career Centers.

In addition, Delaware Health and Social Services is a member of the Workforce Investment Board (WIB). The Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities has also attended and participated in WIB meetings. Most important, there has been a sincere effort to understand and support the special needs of Delaware's Older Workers.

Also, the Delaware Department of Labor, Division of Employment and Training, has provided valuable information in support of the Title V SCSEP program. For example, statistics are collected through a self-assessment survey administered by Delaware DOL to its older One-Stop Career Service Center customers. Survey information from 3,637 older Delawareans, collected from April 2002 through February 2004, was recently shared with Delaware's SCSEP grantee and subgrantees. The statistics provide a good indication of the types of jobs desired by older job seekers; the types of assistance their families currently receive; any barriers that stop the clients from reaching their employment goals; and, their computer and office equipment skills.

g. Avoidance of Disruptions

Special care is taken to ensure current SCSEP participants are not adversely impacted when new census data shows a need for a redistribution of training slots. Any redistribution of slots caused by shifts in the location of the eligible SCSEP population is handled after vacancies occur in current training positions (e.g. due to retirements, separations, placements, and other reasons for termination).

SECTION 5

STATE PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

- a. Delaware distributes participant training authorizations based upon the geographical location of the eligible population, as described in the Federal Equitable Distribution Report. This action ensures all areas of the state --both urban and rural -- are served equitably.
- b. Any future changes in Federal funding or number of authorizations for the Title V Senior Community Service Employment Program will continue to be based on the equitable distribution ratio of the eligible population within the state. We will continue to serve all geographical areas and the eligible population throughout Delaware in a fair, balanced, and impartial manner.
- c. There is concern, however, regarding the manner in which total Federal authorizations are allocated. Specifically, in PY03, the number of slots, along with the associated performance levels and grant funding, were based on the Federal minimum wage rate, which is \$1.00 less than Delaware's minimum wage. This action results in a shortfall in training dollars.